



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
San Diego Public Library

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**NIGHT-THEMED PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS BY JOHN DANIEL ABEL TO
BE SHOWCASED AT PACIFIC BEACH/TAYLOR BRANCH LIBRARY**
*Rare “Nocturnes” Theme Encompasses Landscapes, Denizens of the Night; Exhibition
Catalogue Planned*

SAN DIEGO – More than fifty night-themed paintings and drawings by noted San Diego-area artist John Daniel Abel will open Saturday, August 20, in the gallery of the Pacific Beach/Taylor Branch Library. The exhibition, titled “John Daniel Abel: Nocturnes,” runs through October 29. The public is invited to a free reception for the artist on Saturday, August 20, from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. The Pacific Beach/Taylor Branch Library, which houses the flagship gallery for the San Diego Public Library’s Visual Arts Program, is located at 4275 Cass Street. Library hours are Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 12:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.; Thursdays and Fridays, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; and Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The branch is closed Sundays and Mondays.

Night-themed paintings (referred to as “nocturnes” in the art world) traditionally take the form of landscapes, so, as one might expect, this exhibition contains nighttime renditions of classic Abel themes such as scraggly oaks hugging rock-strewn terrain, eerie views of rural neighborhoods, and haunting studies of battered cars, trucks, and tractors abandoned in fields. Abel’s style is representational and based in illustration, and he favors narratives and symbolic content, but a number of works in this exhibition, especially his renderings of dimly lit, graffitied walls, resemble pure abstractions. Other subjects, whose colors and details are obscured by darkness, assume highly abstract qualities, as well.

Abel’s first love, however, has always been the human figure, especially as it relates to a decaying urban environment. Thus, in this night-oriented exhibition, it is his gritty depictions of people on the fringes of society that will likely elicit the most

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comment. Murderers, drug addicts, the homeless (especially veterans), war criminals, mentally ill, and the dying, to name a few, are all in the mix. Abel's insight into human nature, combined with his skilled painting and rendering abilities, have resulted in a panoply of images that is powerful and unforgettable.

Creating the works for "Nocturnes," Abel's third solo exhibition with the Library's Visual Arts Program, has occupied the artist for the past three years. The accompanying full-color catalogue will include photographs of all of the works on display, a statement by Abel, and Library Curator Mark-Elliott Lugo's extensive comments on the origins of the concept behind the exhibition and the curatorial process that followed. The years-long fascination Abel and Lugo have shared with nighttime imagery, thought-provoking content, and the eccentricities of human behavior, made this project especially rewarding for both.

NOTE TO EDITORS: High-resolution color digital images of many of the works in this exhibition and photographs of the artist are available on request from the library curator.

The San Diego Public Library's Visual Arts Program is a nationally recognized series of exhibitions, lectures, a television program, and other art-related activities. The John Daniel Abel "Nocturnes" exhibition is the most recent of nearly 150 museum-quality contemporary art exhibitions that have been organized by the Visual Arts Program of the San Diego Public Library since 1997. The mission of the Program is to demonstrate the Library's role as a cultural institution embracing a broad range of disciplines, while assisting San Diego's mid-career and older professional artists in achieving wider local, regional, and national attention. Visual Arts Program exhibitions are made possible, in part, by contributions from individuals, volunteer efforts, and the Friends of Central Library. For more information about the Visual Arts Program, the public can contact the library curator at (619) 238-6627 or visit the Library's website at www.sandiegolibrary.org

Learn about other events at the San Diego Public Library's Central Library and 35 branches, find links to numerous additional resources, or search for materials in the Library's catalog online at www.sandiegolibrary.org

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